



**MICHIGAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION**  
**"Conservation is Everyone's Business"**

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March 12, 2011

To: The Honorable Michigan State Senators and Representatives

From: Robert E. Jacobson, President  
Michigan Conservation Foundation

Subject: Michigan Senate Bill 207 and House Bill 4371

Dear Senators and Representatives

The Michigan Conservation Foundation (MCF) was established in 1982 as a nonprofit corporation to administer donated funds for the benefit of wildlife through habitat improvements and the conservation of the state's natural resources. Founded by Carl T. Johnson of Cadillac, 17 year member and chairman of the Natural Resource Commission and founder of the Michigan Bear Hunter's Association.

I am writing this as President of MCF and speaking for our Board of Trustees. We support and are in agreement with SB207 and HB4371 "Hunter Heritage Bills" to allow parents and or a 21 year old mentor to determine when youngsters are old enough to safely handle a firearm when hunting wildlife.

A youngster taking a few hours of a certified "Hunter Safety Course" is not sufficient training, in our opinion, for a youngster to walk a field or forestland area with a lethal firearm to hunt small game.

Example: I, Bob Jacobson started training for hunting small game when I was nine years old by carrying my 'Red Rider' BB gun for a year before hunting with my father, brother, uncles and cousins.

The following year I carried a 410 over and under shotgun and shot my first pheasant, after probably missing ten. This became such a family affair that October 20<sup>th</sup> became a family reunion for the 'Jacobson Family' near Brown City, in Michigan's thumb area.

During the late 1940's through 1960's when your dogs flushed eight or ten roster pheasants in a day and you blazed away, even if you didn't down a pheasant you were hooked, because there was always next year and you would be a better shot.

Quality Michigan Pheasant Hunting on private farms basically ended in the late 1960's due to clean farming, pesticides and the disappearing pheasant population.

I am 77 years old and can still remember shooting my first pheasant, a thrill I will never forget.

Hunter safety was a family priority and if you mistakenly pointed a shotgun near anyone you were unbelievably chastised and you never forgot it.

My son at nine years of age was fortunate to follow the same hunting ritual before it disappeared in Michigan. Thankfully, Nebraska and the Dakota's are still there today for my wife, son and I.

If there was a way to install Dakota's small game hunting in Michigan today, retaining existing hunters and recruiting young hunters would skyrocket.

Our son, now 53 years old and living in Nebraska is training new hunters by inviting young people to go along with him dove, pheasant, turkey or waterfowl hunting. This provides them the opportunity to see and appreciate the "wonders of nature" and if hunting is for them. They seldom fail to see the game they set out to hunt.

Do you see this in Michigan? I think not.

"Everything needs groceries." In wildlife, that means food sources and habitat.

Please make the connection between what's being hunted and is it there?

Passing rules and rules and rules isn't the real answer, habitat, habitat, habitat is.

Good memories are a wonderful thing.

My wife and I still hunt doves, pheasants and waterfowl with our son in Nebraska and wherever. We will stop when we can no longer walk.

Sincerely,

Robert E. (Bob) Jacobson, President  
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